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Program Analysis Report No. 13
Planning and Control Section
Rural Rehabilitation Division

SUMMARY OF FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION MATTRESS AND COMFORTER-MAKING PROGRAM

Introduction of Program and Preliminary Instructions

The workers of the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture and the Home Management Chiefs and Supervisors of Farm Security Administration have long realized that as a general rule, the homes of low income farm families are grossly deficient in proper bedding. Large numbers of farm families in the southern states have raised cotton for years but have never owned a cotton mattress. With a surplus of raw cotton and cotton material in the United States available for distribution through the Surplus Marketing Administration (formerly the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation) programs have been inaugurated by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the Extension Service and by Farm Security Administration to provide many of the low income farmers with cotton mattresses and comforters. Since the program conducted by the AAA and Extension Service is not in operation in all counties where Farm Security Administration clients reside, separate allocations of cotton, ticking and percale have been made to the Farm Security Administration for conducting a mattress and comforter-making program for the particular benefit of FSA clients who may not be eligible for or who may not have opportunity to participate in the AAA-Extension Service program. During August and September, 1939, the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation (now Surplus Marketing Administration) provided certain Farm Security Administration field offices in Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee with cotton and ticking for a limited mattress-making program. Figures are not available in the Washington Office as to the total number of mattresses made available at this time except that there is a record of 35,000 mattresses being made and distributed to FSA clients in the States comprising Region V, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida.

Preparations were begun in November, 1939, by Farm Security Administration to expand the program for the benefit of its clients on a nation-wide basis. A letter of November 7, 1939 to all FSA regional directors advised them of the proposed program and of the amount of cotton, ticking and percale which probably could be made available. These amounts were based on estimates previously furnished by the Regions in answer to letters from Mrs. C. V. Thompson, then Chief of Home Management. The letter of November 7 further gave preliminary instructions as to storage of materials, distribution, method of processing, and amount of material per mattress and comforter on which to base orders for materials. Information was also requested as to name of county and town where the material should be shipped, number of mattresses and comforters to be made, and

number of bales of cotton and yards of ticking and percale that would be required. The information furnished by the Regions in reply to this letter was compiled and a copy thereof was furnished to the Washington Office of the Surplus Marketing Administration. However, on January 9, 1940, another letter was sent to the regional directors advising that further information was required by the FSCC (now SMA) before shipments of materials could be made. The information desired concerned not only the name and address of consignee of each shipment, but statement to the effect that proper arrangements were made at each destination to receive, store, transport and process the material; statement to the effect that the material would not be used in competition with any existing established business and would not be wasted, and a statement to the effect that processing of the material would be conducted in accordance with local laws and regulations. The information received in reply to this letter was also furnished to the Washington Office of the FSCC (now SMA).

Upon advice from the FSCC Office that not more than two comforters should be manufactured for each mattress, it was necessary to give this information to the regional directors and request them to revise their estimates of materials needed accordingly. In order that Surplus Marketing Administration could be provided with uniform information, the regional directors, in letter dated March 7, were requested to submit their revised estimates in triplicate in accordance with a prescribed form enclosed with the letter. The information received in reply to this letter was immediately furnished to the Washington Office of the Surplus Marketing Administration. That Office still refused to make shipments of materials until the FSA field personnel affected had received proper instructions outlining policies and procedure to be followed in conducting this program. This led to the issuance of FSA Administration Letter 290, dated April 22, 1940, subject , "Mattress and Comforter Making Program". The letter outlined briefly the manner in which the program should be conducted and the responsibilities of the Washington and field offices in so conducting it.

Following the issuance of Administration Letter 290, the Surplus Marketing Administration issued a letter dated May 13, 1940 (Mr. Alber's office advised that this date was changed on copies which they mailed to May 23, 1940), to State Welfare Agencies and state directors of Commodity Distribution, enclosing (1) a copy of FSA Administration Letter 290; (2) FSCC Letters of Allocation covering the quantities of materials which had been requested by the FSA regional directors; and (3) Supplemental Letter of Acceptance, which Supplemental Letter of Acceptance confirms the arrangements and understanding reached between the respective parties and certifies to the observance of Surplus Marketing Administration regulations. The letter of May 23 (13) instructed that after Letter of Allocation had been received from the FSCC (now SMA) by the state director of Commodity Distribution, the Supplemental Letter of Acceptance should be executed by the state director of Commodity Distribution, the director of State Welfare Agency, and the state FSA RR director.

Processes in Ordering Material and Shipping It to the Field

The regional director advises the Washington FSA Office, in the form prescribed, as to the amount of material desired, the name and address of consignee, and

other information called for. In placing these orders the regional directors must keep in mind the Surplus Marketing Administration regulations requiring that double mattresses contain 45 to 53 pounds of raw cotton and approximately 10 linear yards of 32 inch width ticking; that single mattresses contain from 30 to 32 pounds of raw cotton and 6 yards of ticking; and that comforters contain 4 pounds of raw cotton and 10 linear yards of 36 inch comforter covering. The information received from the regional director is furnished by the Washington FSA Office to the Washington SMA Office. The state director of Commodity Distribution advises the Washington SMA Office when satisfactory working agreements and arrangements have been made by the field office of the FSA with the State Public Welfare Agency. The Washington SMA Office then forwards to the state director of Commodity Distribution Letter of Allocation covering the material requested by the FSA regional director. On receipt of the Letter of Allocation, the Supplemental Letter of Acceptance is then executed by the state director of Commodity Distribution, the state RR director or other delegated FSA official, and the director of the state Welfare Agency. When the Washington SMA Office has received the Supplemental Letter of Acceptance, it directs that shipment be made of the materials covered in the Letter of Allocation. The Washington SMA Office agreed to keep the Washington FSA Office advised of such shipments ordered but press of other work or other reasons unknown to us have apparently prevented this, as regular reports have not been obtained. (Shipments of materials to some of the regions have been delayed largely due to the fact that satisfactory working agreements and arrangements have not been affected by some of the state FSA and SMA representatives.)

Amount of Material Allocated and Manner of Handling in the Field

Arrangements made in November, 1939 with the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation (now Surplus Marketing Administration) provided that FSA would be furnished during 1940 with 26,000 bales of cotton, 2,000,000 yards of ticking, and 4,000,000 yards of comforter covering. (Tentative arrangements have been made for the SMA to supply FSA during the spring and summer of 1941 with 15,000 bales of cotton and 1,500,000 yards of ticking. Possibilities of obtaining comforter material during this later period appear less certain.) Because of a ruling to the effect that the Surplus Marketing Administration may not furnish surplus material to another Federal agency, materials for conducting this program must be received by the FSA through state Welfare Agencies. The Surplus Marketing Administration is also not permitted to supply these materials if a fee or charge of any kind is to be collected from the ultimate user of the material. No money is provided by FSA or SMA for payment of storage fees, transportation or findings (needles, twine, thread, tufts, and other minor materials required in the processing of mattresses and comforters). It is permissible to have the clients pool their money for the cost of transportation and/or findings, or these items may be provided through welfare agencies.

Regulations and Provisions of Farm Security Administration

FSA Administration Letter 290 provides that all families on FSA rolls are eligible for participation in this program, including RR, RP, and migratory labor camp and other migratory farm laborers and non-commercial families. Materials or finished products are distributed in the order of need beginning with the

families whose needs are greatest, as reported by the Home Management Supervisors. Administration Letter 290 further makes provision that there be no conflict with the mattress demonstration program being conducted by the Extension Service in cooperation with the AAA. Each regional director obtains from the state directors of Extension a list of the counties which have been or may be selected for the Extension Service-AAA program, and all FSA personnel in the designated counties are instructed to furnish the county Agricultural Conservation committee a list of all FSA clients whom FSA expects to assist in this manner. The AAA committee will not approve for the Extension AAA program any person whose name appears on the FSA lists.

Three methods of processing the materials are permitted: (1) by the clients in their homes, (2) by the clients in work centers, and (3) in WPA or NYA Projects. Under the first plan, the RR or HM supervisor or other official in charge arranges to deliver to the clients' homes sufficient quantities of material to process a given number of mattresses and comforters. It is then the duty of the HM supervisor, in cooperation with other agencies and organizations, to furnish instruction to the homemakers (usually a group gathers at the home of one of the participants) in the making of the mattresses and comforters. Under the second plan, the material is delivered to work centers, which, by previous arrangement, will be available to FSA clients. Clients will gather in small groups for instruction and actual construction. Arrangements will then be made for delivering the completed articles to the homes of families which made them. Under the third, or WPA or NYA Project plan, the mattresses and comforters will be processed in WPA or NYA sewing projects and delivered to the families in finished form. The first or second plan is preferred because in this manner the family acquires a home-making skill which will be desirable for future use.

All RR families receiving mattresses or comforters not made by themselves are required as a recognition of such aid to execute Form FSA-RR 197, "Pledge of Cooperation", according to AL 257, and RP Project and migratory labor camp occupants and other migrant farm laborers are required to execute Form FSA 237,"Work Agreement", according to FSA Instruction 741.3. Each family receiving finished products signs in triplicate form FSA 236, "Receipt", one copy of which is forwarded to the regional director. Each county RR supervisor, community manager or camp manager prepares and submits to the regional office not later than the third of each month a report in original only as of the last day of the preceding month, showing for each county in his unit, or for each project or camp under his jurisdiction, the quantities of material on hand at the beginning of the month, received during the month, processed or distributed during the month, and on hand at the end of the month. From the Receipt signed by the recipient family and from the monthly report of the county RR supervisor, community manager or camp manager, the regional director prepares and submits to the Washington Office, in an original and two copies, as of the last day of each month, a report, by states, showing number of clients who participated in the program during the month, the amount of material processed and/or distributed during the month, and the amount on hand at the end of the month. As the material was delayed in reaching the field the Washington FSA Office has not insisted on this monthly report being furnished prior to June 30, 1940, but letter of July 10, 1940, advised all Regions that this report should be submitted as of June 30, 1940, and that beginning with the month of July monthly reports should be submitted regularly as required by Administration Letter 290.